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PRAVDA EDITOR COMMENTS ON U.S.-USSR TALKS

OW070209 Tokyo KYODO in English 0140 GMT 7 Dec 84

[Text] Moscow, Dec 7 KYODO -- The Soviet Union is prepared to hold serious talks with the United States on improvement of bilateral relations, PRAVDA editor Viktor G. Afanasyev said Thursday.

In a meeting with a visiting Japanese journalist delegation, Afanasyev said that the Soviet Union is not setting any precondition for a meeting between U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and Foreign Minister Andrey Gromyko in Geneva in January.

The editor of the Soviet Communist Party paper said that he did not rule out the possibility of summit talks between President Ronald Reagan and Soviet chief Konstantin Chernenko, but stressed that considerable preparation would be necessary before the two leaders actually met.

He said nonmilitarization of space and limitation of strategic nuclear weapons would be main subjects of discussion in U.S.-Soviet talks in the future.

Afanasyev indicated difficulty in an early visit to Japan by Foreign Minister Gromyko.

He said the Soviet Union was prepared to discuss Japan-Soviet relations on matters other than the territorial issue involving four tiny islands off Hokkaido which have been under Soviet occupation since the end of World War II.

DOUBTS RAISED ABOUT U.S. DESIRE FOR ARMS CONTROL

PM070845 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 6 Dec 84 First Edition p 5

[Vitaliy Gan "Commentator's Column": "Yet Another Command"]

[Text] The Pentagon is reaching out with increasing keenness toward space and the practical implementation of the adventurist "star wars" concept. The other day a new step was taken in that direction on the Potomac that makes one wonder about the sincerity of official U.S. statements about wanting genuine arms limitation.

A U.S. military department spokesman announced that the White House has decided to set up a U.S. Armed Forces Joint Space Command. This Pentagon department has been given senior [golovnoy] status and extensive powers -- from theoretical research and planning to the actual utilization of military space systems. The U.S. defense secretary personally and the Joint Chiefs of Staff will have control of its activity -- evidence of special importance.

Essentially they are creating the organizational infrastructure for specific work on the militarist use of space. In order to make these efforts more effective, the Joint Space Command has been given the job of tackling operational tasks that it will take over from the space command staffs that are already operating under the U.S. Air Force and Navy.

Thus, more and more steps are being taken toward implementing the very dangerous slogan "He who controls space will be able to control the whole world," which is put forward by the theorists of U.S. hegemonism. These ambitions, masquerading as the notion of a "purely defensive shield," are scarcely likely to decieve anyone.

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ZHUKOV ON REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S USSR POLICY

PM181250 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 17 Dec 84 First Edition p 6

[Article by PRAVDA political observer Yuriy Zhukov: "Choice"]

[Text] More than a month has passed since the U.S. presidential elections. While the White House is preparing to announce before Congress the U.S. policy guidelines for the next 4 years, events in the international arena are taking their course. The situation remains tense in the world's "hot spots." The series of sessions by NATO leading organs, only just concluded, confirmed the intention of the United States and its allies to continue and even step up the arms race, including the nuclear arms race.

It is natural that people everywhere, and primarily in the United States itself, are asking more and more often: And how does the U.S. leadership intend to fulfill its election campaign pledges, having been reelected mainly because it promised the voters to seek the reduction and even liquidation of nuclear weapons, effective disarmament measures, and the normalization of relations with all countries, and primarily with the USSR?

The Soviet Union and the fraternal socialist countries have declared clearly and unambiguously that the further development of the situation depends largely on the reelected U.S. Administration and on whether it is really prepared to give concrete expression to its peace-loving statements. If this were to happen, the USSR will not be found wanting, as the Soviet side stated during the 25 November conversation between Comrade K.U. Chernenko and N. Kinnock, leader of the British Labor Party. The Soviet Union advocates good relations with the United States on an honest and equal basis -- and, even more so, an end to the arms race and elimination of the threat of nuclear war.

At the conclusion of its 3-4 December Berlin session, the Warsaw Pact states' Foreign Ministers Committee declared that opportunities exist to change the situation for the better, but that this requires a shift to the policy of realism and businesslike cooperation in resolving the tasks facing the peoples in Europe and other continents. The ministers acclaimed the agreement reached by the United States and the USSR to conduct talks on the entire range of interrelated questions pertaining to the nonmilitarization of outer space and the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons and medium-range nuclear means. At the same time, they advocated that the goals and tasks of these talks be determined with all clarity from the very start. And even more to the point, in their final communique the ministers set out an extensive program of actions in this direction, which opens the way to accords based on the principles of equality and identical security.

The immediate future will show whether the U.S. Administration is really prepared for constructive talks based on this principle which underlies previously concluded Soviet-American accords. So far, the American and entire international public has been forced to conclude that clarity on this issue is still lacking. As THE NEW YORK TIMES observer J. Reston wrote on 12 December, the U.S. Administration "still has not decided what proposals will be submitted"'by the U.S. side, "if such proposals are to be submitted at all."

It is true that the very same NEW YORK TIMES declared on 7 December that "President Reagan has asked his advisers on arms limitation issues to inform the Soviet Union over the coming month that he is striving for stability in Soviet-American relations." The newspaper reported in passing that "officials are trying to refute the widely held opinion that Reagan is a President who gives little attention to arms control issues."

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